1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

of this system, these will become clear since many of them are still essentially related to the household. Within the household there are individual producers who may sometimes maintain independent or semi-independent economic activities from others in the household. Again, above the household level there are often groups of households whose members, or more often whose household heads, are linked together in common economic activities. Finally in the traditional system there is the market place and its relationship to the household and to other markets. Outside of this set of interrelated units, but articulated with them, are the modern activities provided for by the government and the large commercial enterprises that have been in Bornu now for nearly half a century.

The Household as an Economic Unit

Most Kanuri households have from three to ten people living inside the compound walls. As we have seen, each person, except small children, has his or her own sleeping hut, and the major group in the household is generally a family. In the larger cities, especially the capital of Maiduguri, larger households are more common and often household heads rent out a sleeping hut or two to strangers who live semi-independently from the rest of the household. As households change through time their members, and most importantly their male members, both kin and nonkin clients, move out and establish their own residences either close by or some distance away. Whether or not they maintain close contacts with their former compound head depends to a large extent on the economic relationships being established and maintained or broken when the independent residence is set up.

The division of labor within the household depends for the most part on the sex and age of its members. The women cook, draw water for the household, help on the farm if they are not in seclusion, raise garden crops in the compound, thresh, pound and grind grain, sweep and clean the compound, tend the young children, keep chickens and ducks, and engage in petty trade, usually of a retail nature. Some women specialize in creating the elaborate Kanuri women's coiffure. Others make pots, while still others make baskets, and a few are professional entertainers who work with male drummers and praise-singers. Generally, however, these specialized activities are not common, and most men when asked about their wives claim they have no occupation besides that of being a housewife. The major tasks then are cooking and preparing food, helping on the farm, and raising children. In all these jobs younger girls help out and are under the authority of the older women who organize this work in the compound.

Men engage in politics, farm, dye, build, work metals, tan animal hides, work leather, buy, sell and slaughter cattle and smaller livestock, tailor, embroider, make hats and musical instruments, trade, weave mats, and work as laborers. They are also religious specialists, barbers, carpenters, mechanics, clerks, civil servants, and hold a host of newly introduced jobs of European origin as well as being tax payers. It is no exaggeration to say that the economy is controlled almost totally by men. The household head dispenses all incoming cash and kind resulting from craft or farm work, although a woman may keep and do as she pleases with the proceeds of her small garden inside the compound. The household head doles out

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

the money weekly to his wives for petty market purchases and does all major purchases of food and clothing on his own. He also pays for ceremonies, transportation, and most of the gift-giving engaged in by himself and others in the household. Except for the sale of cooked food, pottery production, and female hair dressing, men control all income producing work of any kind in the entire society.

Households as Consumers

Almost all people in Bornu use, obtain, or eat the things they need because they are members of particular households or are related to a nearby household as a subordinate of its household head. The patterns of consumption vary enormously from that of a rural peasant to that of a wealthy trader or political leader in the city. However, the vast bulk of the population stays within a fairly uniform range that involves a relatively low level of consumption. Most families, especially those in rural areas, eat two meals a day; one between 8:00 and 9:00 A.M. and the other in the early evening between 8:00 and 9:00 P.M. Men of the compound and their male friends eat together while the women eat separately. Smaller snacks are eaten during the day, and in the city it is common to eat more often especially among salaried workers who return home for breakfast about 9:00 to 9:30 A.M. and finish the work day at 2:00 to 2:30 P.M. at which time they eat a noon-day meal. The average rural household consumes about eight pounds of millet (the staple grain food) every day, or about one and a half tons per year. The millet comes from farm products used by the household plus any buying that has to be done to augment this. For those few at the higher end of the social scale food bills can be enormous. One political leader in the capital claims that during his heyday he used to feed as many as seventy people a day and had to have a very smoothly-running household to get this much food processed and ready for his guests on a daily basis. In the ordinary peasant household men give their wives money on a weekly basis to purchase condiments for the staple food and sometimes meat as well although many of the richer men prefer to buy meat themselves. The money, usually anywhere from thirty cents to about $1.50 is given to the wife, or to each wife, or sometimes to the senior wife who then divides it among the co-wives.[1]

To an outsider Kanuri food seems almost infinitely expandable. I have often watched one bowl of food brought into the presence of a household head. He would glance around at the half dozen or so of us present and then ask us to join him, as he had to do by custom. On the other hand household heads have complained to me that they feed too many. "But what can we do?" they say, friends and would-be clients or subordinates know when food is to be brought, and they simply appear, at which point custom forces the host to be gracious. Those who eat continually at a friend's or a relative's house are in his debt and he may use their services as he wishes. This is one of the principal means by which clientship starts to operate. If the client eats with the patron, and the patron asks for services, and if both are satisfied, the relationship soon becomes an established one.

Clothing, like food, is in the hands of the household head although, and as

[1] Nigerian money is in pounds, shillings, and pence. I have translated values here at the rate of $2.80 American to £1 Nigerian.

425 practice is undergoing change. House plots in desirable loca-
241 tions in Maiduguri, the capital city, are bought and sold,
178 though in theory land for one's house is obtained in the same manner as farm land--by asking the village head for a site to build one's house.

2. Subsistence Economy and Cash Crops.

243 Millet is the staple crop of the Kanuri, and both sorghum (Sorghum vulgare) and pearl millet (Pennisetum spicatum) are
243 grown. Planting takes place immediately after the first rains
221 in May and the grain is harvested in September. The growing season is short as rain falls only in the months between May and September and not at all for the remainder of the year. Consequently there is only one crop during the year. Since millet grows without much attention, agricultural labor is
[462] needed only during planting, weeding, and harvesting. Men and women work together in the fields during these periods. Crops must be sown shortly after the onset of the rains for the growing time is relatively short and any delay in planting might reduce the exposure to rainfall which is necessary for a good harvest. Late planting in a year in which the total rainfall
[73] is slight can be disastrous for a family. Really bad years can mean famine, and though there has not been a major famine since World War I, that famine is remembered as a catastrophe. Older people calculate their age in relation to the year of the famine. In the villages millet which a family harvests in Septem-

592 In addition to the formal relationships between master and slave, and between adopted son and chibuna, described above, there are informal ways through which an individual may become attached to a household. Every adult must be attached to some 592 household. Since the minimal household is represented by a man 596 and his wife, a divorced couple marks the end of their household. Each of them, man and woman, must now attach himself to another household. The primary reason for this is economic--and it makes itself felt immediately in the problem of food. [462] A man without a wife has no one to cook for him. Since no Kanuri man would ever cook for himself (cooking and preparation of food are tasks confined to women), he must attach himself to the household of a friend, neighbor, or close relative, [156] and regularly take his meals there. However, it is somewhat shameful to continue on in this position, and a man who had recently divorced his wife tends to take another wife before long, thereby re-establishing his own household. The woman, after a divorce, goes back to her luwali, and becomes a zogor who lives in his household until she remarries. She, too, becomes a temporary member of her luwali's household and takes her meals with the women of that household. The luwali has the responsibility of offering a roof to his ward after her divorce, and it is not uncommon to find a zogor living for a time as a part of a large household. Men will regularly come to court her, and in time she will remarry and leave her luwali's household.

000 There is still another way to become part of a large house-

241 565 559 463 [467] are entitled to farm land, not all actually farm. Slightly more than half of the talaka, craftsmen, and low-status people in the sample farm; these all farm their own plots assisted by their wives, the typical pattern of farming for lower class people. The canteen traders, a group of prosperous individuals with large households, all have a farm, though none farm themselves. Their farms are worked for them by their tata njima, or by hired laborers. Only one of the kalyna in the sample farms for himself, though of course they all farm for the Ajia on his farm. Finally, it can be seen that the pattern of farming is not absolutely regular each year. Seven of the fifteen individuals who had not made a farm that year had farmed the previous year. Most of the people of Geidam do farm, but none 241 433 depend entirely on farming for their living and since farming is a secondary activity for all, they may omit farming on a given year, and may rent their land to someone else. Still others have entirely given up farming.

2. Craftsmen.

443 463 The economy of an urban community depends primarily on its specialists. These may be considered as falling within three broad categories. The first category is made up of artisans, that is, skilled workers who produce a product which the ordinary man cannot easily make for himself, or who perform a service requiring special skills which are beyond the abilities of every citizen. These will be referred to here as craftsmen. The sec-

[GEIDAM]

44 From an overall examination of the sorts of goods sold
438 in the Geidam market, one can draw the following conclusions.
433 More than one-third of the sellers are involved in the retail-
ing of a wide variety of foodstuffs, most of it grown, collected
[543] or prepared by the seller himself. In some cases they are
vegetables (onions) grown on garden plots for sale, in others
they are types of leaves (kuka leaves gathered by Shuwa or
Buduwai women) collected for the market, or a specialized
product in which a group deals (butter sold by Fulani women).
[542] Dried fish were caught by fishermen and smoke-dried by women
who now sell them in the market. Fully another third of the
sellers are engaged in the sale of clothing or household goods,
of which an overwhelming proportion have been manufactured by
Kanuri craftsmen. They sew the clothing, make hats, shoes and
the entire range of household goods noted above. Included
within this category are the suppliers of raw materials to the
craftsmen: grass for mats, raffia for baskets, tanned skins,
etc.; also the craftsmen themselves who work to order in the
44 market-place. The only exceptions to the locally made items
438 which predominate in the area of clothing and household goods
439 are cloth, which is no longer locally woven and represents per-
haps the single most important imported item, and items like
enamelware and buckets. Of the slightly less than one-third
of the sellers that remains to be accounted for, sellers of
condiments, stimulants and sundry and miscellaneous items, most
sell typically local Kanuri items. The taberma sells imported

[GEIDAM]

796 though it was admitted that there were Kanuri who drank water
785 in secret. In Maiduguri there are Kanuri who eat openly in
183 the market-place during Ramadan, but Geidam is too small a town
[369] for anyone to violate religious custom so blatantly. As Rama-
785 dan in 1967 fell in the hottest and most uncomfortable time of
512 the year, fasting, and in particular abstaining from drinking,
is very demanding. Most people radically alter their schedules.
During Ramadan they customarily rise at 3 A.M. at the call of
a waker, pray and drink something and then remain up doing
their work until sunrise (6 A.M.). They then work for an ad-
ditional two or three hours until the sun is high in the sky,
when they retire to sleep until three or four in the afternoon.
[462] From four until sunset (6:45 P.M.) people again work, and the
women pound and grind millet. At sunset the Ladan calls to an-
[262] nounce the end of the day's fast. People then drink quantities
[272] of a porridge made of millet and soured milk (*bəlam*). At ten
or eleven in the evening people eat the one hearty meal of the
[517] day. Activities such as visiting, chatting and strolling con-
tinue on into the night. During Ramadan, the entire daily
schedule is shifted so that people sleep through the hottest
hours of the day, work during the cooler periods at sunrise and
at sunset, break the fast with a light meal which is followed
by a heavy meal some hours later, and spend much of the night
in leisure activities. In actual fact little work is accomplished
in this month.

785 As the sun set on Tuesday, April 30th, everyone looked
796

12 in choosing households.(1) An attempt was made, however, to obtain some degree of representativeness of the Bornu rural economy. Thus the budgets range from that of a single young man, just barely supporting himself in food and clothing, to the expenditures (not income) of a District Chief.

128 Before moving on to a detailed analysis of Kanuri production, consumption and distribution, it is necessary to give a brief outline of 592 Kanuri economic activities. The household group is the basic economic unit. This group is a nuclear or polygynous family living sometimes in a compound, at other times forming part of a larger compound. Its economic independence of other units depends upon whether or not it is a part of a larger extended household organization. But whether or not this is the case, the family unit under its male head maintains its own farmland, engages in its own dry season work, owns its own tools, animals, cooks its own food, and is treated as a taxable unit by the local political leaders.

462 592 Within the household, women cook, draw water for the household, help on the farm (unless they are in seclusion), raise garden crops in the compound, thresh, pound, and grind grain, sweep and clean the compound, keep chickens and ducks, and engage in petty trade. The major contribution of women to the household is their labour in cooking [434] and help on the farm. Income derived from the sale of garden produce or the sale of cooked foods are considered to belong to the woman herself.

[114] (1) For experimental validation of the reliability of this method see:
(a) Honigman, J. and I. Sampling Reliability in Ethnological Field Work, SJA, Vol. 11, (1955) pp. 282-287.
(b) Honigman, J.J. and Carrera, R., Another Experiment in Sample Reliability, SJA, Vol. 13, (1957) pp. 99-102.

462 Men rule, farm, dye, build, work metals, skin, tan and work leather, slay and handle cattle and small livestock, tailor, embroider, make hats, musical instruments, trade, weave mats, and work as labourers. [463] [177] They are also religious specialists, carpenters, mechanics, clerks, civil servants and a host of newly introduced jobs of European origin, as well as being the taxpayers. It is no exaggeration to say 562 592 that the economy is controlled by men. The male head of the household dispenses all income in cash and [illegible] kind resulting from farming and craft work. (Women's gardens are not farms but small plots inside the compound). The male doles out money to his wives for petty market buying and does the major purchases of food grains and clothing himself. He also pays for ceremonies, transportation and most of the gift-giving 562 done by himself and the members of his household. Except for pottery 323 production by female specialists, men control all income producing craft work in the society as well as all the major distributive functions.

423 Almost all rural household heads own some land in or near their hamlet or village. Land ownership results from a combination of usufruct and inheritance rights and is related as well to the local political organization. These factors are discussed in more detail in the section below on operating costs. Many urban people obtain rural farms from relatives in the bush or retain plots of land in rural areas after having moved to the city. This latter group sends out either relatives or labourers to work the land. In some cases the household head moves out from the city to bush for the necessary working period required to tend the farm.

241 Rural peasants work their own land. The men clear the land and are helped in the planting, hoeing and reaping by their wives, and/ 000 or other compound members. Another source of labour is the gerwa (co-